T. Stothard Esq. R.A. del.

Engraved by J. Parker

The Victim

Published by W. Button Pater Noster Row Sep. 5. 1800.

T. Stothard Esq. R.A. del.

Engraved by J. Parker

The Victim

Published by W. Button Pater Noster Row Sep. 5. 1800.

1069

8416.aaa.41
1-3.

THE

VICTIM,

IN

FIVE LETTERS TO ADOLPHUS.

Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

GOLDSMITH.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. BUTTON, PATERNOSTER ROW,
BY C. WHITTINGHAM, DEAN STREET, FETTER LANE.

1800.

BRITISH MUSEUM
NOLI ME TANGERE
ET MON

PREFACE.

THE love of happiness is a passion connatural to Man. For the possession of this happiness he ardently pants: and though he may frequently miss the way in which it is attainable, yet he never abandons the pursuit. Disappointment does not extinguish, but invigorate, desire. Hope impels him to make new exertions by new means; and he is led to believe that, however circuitous his route, or however many and great the difficulties he may have to encounter, he shall

finally surmount all obstacles, and find his toil amply rewarded by fruition.

This attempt is laudable—it is natural: and he that shall seek to divert him from his purpose, or to lead him into paths that shall end in disappointment, is undoubtedly an enemy: for he is endeavouring not merely to deprive him of his only solace, but to render more painful a journey that is already sufficiently intersected with calamity.

Whether these remarks be applicable to the Gentleman to whom the following Letters are addressed, the candid Reader will determine.

THE

VICTIM.

LETTER I.

'Detested be the artful villain's name,
Who brings confiding innocence to shame;
Blasts the fair blossom of a father's race,
And brings a mother's blessing to disgrace;
Destroys some object of sublime desire,
To quench a spark of transitory fire!
Who spends in sighs affectedly his day,
Kneels to deceive, and worships to betray,
To wound alone shall languish to be blest,
And die—to plant a dagger in her breast.'

THAT the rule of human duty is summarily comprehended in those divine aphorisms, love to God, and love to man, is a truth to which Adolphus readily agrees. With pleasure have I heard him expatiate

on the charms of sympathy; on the transport that must animate the breast of him who shall wipe away the tear of sorrow from distress; who shall pour the balm of consolation into the bosom of affliction, and feel an ardent wish, not only to alleviate, but to remove, if possible, the cause of inquietude.

While contemplating a trait so honourable to humanity, I find an insuperable difficulty, Adolphus, in attempting to reconcile your principles with your conduct: or, to speak more accurately, in reconciling those principles with the notions you have formed of the crimes of seduction, and of that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, which the virtuous in every age have united to condemn.

For the perfidious villain, who shall spread the snare for unsuspecting innocence, and transgress the bounds of chastity, no pu-

nishment, you think, is adequate; but that to him who shall indulge the same licentious passion, where there is no infringement of pristine virtue, little moral turpitude attaches.

But this reasoning is fallacious. For if it be granted, that the wretch who violates the chastity of my daughter, deserves execration; he that shall take advantage of the painful disaster, and seek to augment her guilt, and to perpetuate her infamy by reiterated acts of impurity, will not be considered, by adepts in moral science, as far behind him in atrocity.

That the crime of seduction is of prodigious magnitude, must be allowed on all hands: for independent of the turpitude of the action, simply considered, of the irreparable disgrace, of the anguish, and of

the remorse that must rend the bosom of her who shall have become the victim of perfidy and of lust; distress the most inconceivable is inflicted on the heart of the mourning parent, the affectionate relative, the sympathizing friend; all of whom are too nearly interested not to feel the most pungent sorrow.

Besides, the infamy attached to this detestable crime is not hastily forgotten. A censorious world is never backward to propagate disgrace, nor yet unwilling to ascribe delinquency to other causes than the diabolical arts and stratagems of man: for the misconduct of the daughter is frequently charged to the indiscretion or the negligence of others, and perhaps obliquely suggested to be a kind of hereditary disease, which other branches of the family have not perfectly escaped.

In forming a comparison between the evil of seduction and that of subsequent prostitution, it will perhaps be said, that the crime of seduction is abundantly greater, because, if the barrier of virtue be once broken, the way to prostitution must in future be less difficult; for she that has once suffered the enemy of her peace to exceed the limits by which her innocence was guarded, has relinquished a post from which he cannot be easily dislodged; that she may possibly feel less repugnance, or less shame, at a second approach, or, if not, she will certainly find that she has weakened the power of resistance.

But this reasoning is neither compatible with the rule of duty, nor the maxims of prudence. Every act of conformity to it is, therefore, a violation of moral obligation, and a notorious misuse of a disaster that loudly calls for contrition and for cau-

tion: for surely he that has once been taken by surprise, or suffered a defeat, will not therefore conclude that circumspection is needless, or that victory can never accompany resistance; but will, on the contrary, if he have not lost both his prowess and his prudence, endeavour to profit by his former remissness, redouble his vigilance in future, and remain for ever on the watch.

The reason, perhaps, why the first violation of innocence, on the part of the woman, is generally represented as incomparably more atrocious than subsequent acts of the same nature, originates in popular prejudice. In order, however, to ascertain the moral turpitude of actions, reference must be had, not to the opinions of men, but to the standard of duty. This is the only criterion. To chastity of conduct there is at all times an obligation from which

neither the man nor the woman can ever be released. The command is founded in righteousness, is conformable to the purity of the divine nature, and adapted to promote general happiness. Consequences arising from different acts of the same kind, are subordinate considerations — they are effects of that deviation, not the cause of it.

It has already been allowed, that the first forfeiture of innocence is attended with consequences truly afflictive; but these consequences, however many and grievous, are not surely more calamitous than those that result from perseverance in evil!— from obduracy of heart, insensibility to shame, contempt of decorum, the propagation of disease, and, eventually, the extinction of all the feelings that endear man to man; that sweeten the intercourse

of life, and without which existence would be misery!

Various, and indeed inevitable, are the sorrows connected with the life of man. 'So full is the world of calamity, that every source of pleasure is polluted, and every retirement of tranquillity disturbed.' Who, that shall heedfully retrace the transactions of a single day, or minutely examine the thoughts by which he has been either delighted or amused, will not see, if exempt from intentional evil, abundant reason for regret. What, then, must the vile seducer feel, who shall reflect that he has augmented his misery and his guilt by adventitious means—that he has been the voluntary, the deliberate agent of corruption!—that he perfidiously allured unwary innocence from the path of virtue; despoiled her of her honour and her happiness; clouded all the

prospects of future life; and, with a heart inexorable to intreaty and complaint, left the credulous victim a prey to perpetual sorrow and disgrace.

The agitation of a mind awakened to see the turpitude of such perfidy is pathetically described by the ingenious Shenstone in the following elegy: and suffer me to say, that if Adolphus have not experienced the same, or similar distress, it is not because there is no ground for remorse, but because he has never seriously considered the dreadful evil, and the pernicious tendency of his own conduct.

Why mourns my friend! why weeps his downcast eye?
That eye where mirth, where fancy us'd to shine;
Thy cheerful meads reprove that swelling sigh;
Spring ne'er enamell'd fairer meads than thine.

Art thou not lodg'd in Fortune's warm embrace?
Wert thou not form'd by Nature's partial care?
Bless'd in thy song, and bless'd in ev'ry grace
That wins the friend, or that enchants the fair!

'Damon, said he, thy partial praise restrain;
Not Damon's friendship can my peace restore;
Alas! his very praise awakes my pain,
And my poor wounded bosom bleeds the more.

For oh! that Nature on my birth had frown'd,
Or Fortune fix'd me to some lowly cell!
Then had my bosom 'scap'd this fatal wound,
Nor had I bid these vernal sweets farewell.

But led by Fortune's hand, her darling child,
My youth her vain licentious bliss admir'd;
In Fortune's train the syren Flatt'ry smil'd,
And rashly hallow'd all her queen inspir'd.

Of folly studious, ev'n of vices vain,
Ah vices! gilded by the rich and gay!
I chas'd the guileless daughters of the plain,
Nor dropp'd the chase till Jessy was my prey.

Poor artless maid! to stain thy spotless name,
Expence, and art, and toil, united strove;
To lure a breast that felt the purest flame,
Sustain'd by virtue, but betray'd by love.

School'd in the science of Love's mazy wiles,
I cloth'd each feature with affected scorn;
I spoke of jealous doubts and fickle smiles,
And, feigning, left her anxious and forlorn.

Then while the fancy'd rage alarm'd her care,
Warm to deny, and zealous to disprove;
I bade my words the wonted softness wear,
And seiz'd the minute of returning love.

To thee, my Damon, dare I paint the rest?
Will yet thy love a candid ear incline?
Assur'd that Virtue, by misfortune press'd,
Feels not the sharpness of a pang like mine.

Nine envious moons matur'd her growing shame;
Ere while to flaunt it in the face of day;
When scorn'd of Virtue, stigmatiz'd by Fame,
Low at my feet desponding Jessy lay.

'Henry, she said, by thy dear form subdu'd,
See the sad reliques of a nymph undone!
I find, I find this rising sob renew'd;
I sigh in shades, and sicken at the sun.

Amid the dreary gloom of night I cry,
When will the morn's once pleasing scenes return?
Yet what can morn's returning ray supply,
But foes that triumph, or but friends that mourn!

Alas! no more that joyous morn appears
That led the tranquil hours of spotless fame;
For I have steep'd a father's couch in tears,
And ting'd a mother's glowing cheek with shame.

The vocal birds that raise their matin strain,
The sportive lambs, increase my pensive moan;
All seem to chase me from the cheerful plain,
And talk of truth and innocence alone.

If thro' the garden's flow'ry tribes I stray,
Where bloom the jasmines that could once allure,
Hope not to find delight in us, they say,
For we are spotless, Jessy; we are pure.

Ye flow'rs! that well reproach a nymph so frail,
Say, could you with my virgin fame compare?
The brightest bud that scents the vernal gale
Was not so fragrant, and was not so fair.

Now the grave old alarm the gentler young,
And all my fame's abhorr'd contagion flee;
Trembles each lip, and faulters ev'ry tongue,
That bids the morn propitious smile on me.

Thus for your sake I shun each human eye;
I bid the sweets of blooming youth adieu:
To die I languish, but I dread to die,
Lest my sad fate should nourish pangs for you.

Raise me from earth; the pains of want remove,
And let me silent seek some friendly shore;
There only, banish'd from the form I love,
My weeping virtue shall relapse no more.

Be but my friend; I ask no dearer name;
Be such the meed of some more artful fair;
Nor could it heal my peace, or chase my shame,
That Pity gave what Love refus'd to share.

Force not my tongue to ask its scanty bread;
Nor hurl thy Jessy to the vulgar crew;
Not such the parent's board at which I fed!
Not such the precept from his lips I drew!

Haply, when age has silver'd o'er my hair,
Malice may learn to scorn so mean a spoil;
Envy may slight a face no longer fair,
And Pity welcome to my native soil.'

She spoke—Nor was I born of savage race;
Nor could these hands a niggard boon assign;
Grateful she clasp'd me in a last embrace,
And vow'd to waste her life in pray'rs for mine.

I saw her foot the lofty bark ascend;
I saw her breast with ev'ry passion heave;
I left her—torn from ev'ry earthly friend;
Oh! my hard bosom! which could bear to leave!

Brief let me be; the fatal storm arose;
The billows rag'd, the pilot's art was vain;
O'er the tall mast the circling surges close;
My Jessy—floats upon the wat'ry plain!

And—see my youth's impetuous fires decay;
Seek not to stop Reflection's bitter tear;
But warn the frolic, and instruct the gay,
From Jessy floating on her wat'ry bier!'

I am your's, &c.

LETTER II.

'Ah! wretched woman, she who strays for bread,
And sells the sacred pleasures of the bed;
Condemn'd each call of passion to obey,
And in despite of nature to be gay;
To force a simper, with a throbbing heart,
And call to aid the feeble helps of art;
Oblig'd to suffer each impure caress,
The slave of Passion, and the drudge of Dress;
Compell'd to suit her temper to each taste,
Scorn'd, if too wanton, hated, if too chaste.'

SINCE then it is agreed, Adolphus, that the moral evil of seduction is great, and the consequences attending it distressing, why should it be imagined that subsequent acts of the same nature are comparatively blameless?

As a moral agent, the unhappy delinquent, whom you would inhumanly hire to criminal indulgence, ought to have kept

her chastity inviolate; but the infringement of that chastity does not render a repetition of the crime less atrocious. The act simply considered is, in both cases, a transgression of divine law: and surely her obligation to duty is not lessened by a breach of the precept! Nay, the dread of adding to her opprobrium and her guilt, should rather operate as an additional motive to purity of conduct; and especially when it is considered, that those relatives, or friends, who so feelingly lamented the first lapse of virtue, must experience no small consolation in reflecting, that though one deviation from the path of rectitude pierced the heart with many sorrows, yet that these wounds are not likely to be opened afresh by reiterated acts of the like nature.

If, then, it be admitted that the crime of seduction is enormous, and not to be

vindicated on any principles; what, Sir, becomes of the boasted philanthropy of him who shall seek to gratify his libidinous desires on the unhappy woman whom others have seduced! Is it humane to increase wretchedness?—What! are the stores of anguish not yet full? is the miserable delinquent not sufficiently burthened with guilt, that one sin more must be added to sink her still deeper in perdition! For surely if the first departure from rectitude be vitious, a repetition of the crime must involve still greater misery; and to augment calamity is not the duty of benevolence.

Imagine, for a moment, Adolphus, that the deluded victim is your only child—the beloved of your heart; for the improvement of whose mind no pains have been spared, no expence with-held; over whom parental affection has ever fondly hovered

to preserve from injury and from insult; in whose welfare centered your hopes and your happiness; and then say whether you would think the lascivious wretch comparatively blameless, who should seek by art, or by bribery, to induce her to continue a practice that must enhance her guilt, prolong her infamy, blunt all the feelings of the heart, render access to the avenues of contrition more difficult, and perhaps the hope of reformation a barren anguish?

It has been remarked, by an elegant writer on moral science, 'That the criminal commerce of the sexes corrupts and depraves the mind and moral character more than any single species of vice whatever. That ready perception of guilt, that prompt and decisive resolution against it which constitutes a virtuous character, is seldom found in persons addicted to these indulgences. They prepare an easy admission for every

sin that seeks it; are, in low life, usually the first stage of men's progress to the most desperate villanies; and, in high life, to that lamented dissoluteness of principle, which manifests itself in profligacy of public conduct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and moral probity.'

Let it never be forgotten, Sir, that those unhappy women who are allured to vice by the hope of reward, 'were, as one expresses it, all once, if not virtuous, at least innocent; and have perhaps been gazed at in the ardor of parental affection till tears have started to the eye; have been catched to the bosom with transport, in the prattling simplicity of infancy; have been watched in sickness with anxiety that suspended sleep; have been fed by the toil of industrious poverty, and reared to maturity with hope and fear, and might still have continued blameless and easy,

but for the arts and insinuations of those whose rank, fortune, or education, furnished them with means to corrupt or to delude them. Let the libertine reflect a moment on the situation of that woman, who, being forsaken by her betrayer, is reduced to the necessity of turning prostitute for bread—who is become the drudge of extortion, and the sport of drunkenness; sometimes the property of one man, and sometimes the common prey of accidental lewdness; at one time tricked up for sale by the mistress of a brothel, at another begging in the streets to be relieved from hunger by wickedness; without any hope in the day but of finding some whom folly or excess may expose to her allurements; and without any reflection at night, but such as guilt and terror impress upon her.'

When speaking of the crime of seduction, it is common to hear men of loose

principles consoling themselves with the reflection, that whatever may have been their failings, or their vices, they never ruined any man's child—they never wrung the tear of grief from maternal eyes, nor sent the hoary sire in sorrow to the grave: but who, nevertheless, are hardy enough to declare, that they think it a matter of little moment to indulge a lascivious intercourse with those unhappy women whom others have corrupted.

Such, I think, is the language of Adolphus. But so far is this practice from being comparatively blameless, that it is enormously wicked: and could we detach from seduction the guilt of those detestable preliminaries by which it is effected, is much more atrocious. For it is not an act of incontinence merely, but also a flagrant violation of that benevolent command by which man is bound to promote the happi-

ness of man. It is, in fact, an attempt to propagate calamity; to add sin to sin; which are acts of injustice and of cruelty.

To imagine that the pernicious effects of incontinence are confined to the parties themselves, is a gross mistake. Reiterated acts of impurity have a natural tendency to make the heart more vitious—to exterminate all sense of decency and of shame: and when this is the case, those women who live by the wages of prostitution, feel no restraint, but are fitted for the business of corruption. They are, in fact, interested in the subversion of innocence—in contaminating the morals of mankind; for on their success in this diabolical warfare depends their subsistence.

A man, therefore, who indulges a promiscuous intercourse with women of this description, can never know the extent of

his own wickedness. Because the evil resulting from it seldom terminates quiescently in the objects of his concupiscence, but is, on the contrary, ever struggling to communicate its destructive influences to others who perhaps never heard of his atrocities, but who, nevertheless, could they trace effects to their causes, would have to charge him with being remotely instrumental to both their wretchedness and their ruin.

It has already been remarked, that prostitution, in the first instance, is a gross violation of divine law; which law, let it be remembered, is not relaxed, nor obligation to regard it lessened, because it has been once broken.

It would be a phenomenon in the records of criminal jurisprudence, were a man, convicted of a crime, to urge, in extenuation of his conduct, that it was not

the first offence, but the second!—The very plea would be an aggravation of his guilt, and excite, not the clemency, but the indignation of his judge. The law, as a rule of action, is immutable, and is as much levelled at every subsequent transgression as against the first: and that the sin of the delinquent, in a repetition of prostitution, is greater, appears from the consideration, that guilt is added to guilt; that the same authority in the law is again contemned, as well as those convictions and remonstrances of conscience, which are the natural concomitants of evil, to which also, while chaste, she was a stranger, and which were wisely intended to operate as additional motives to avoid, and which have indeed an immediate tendency to deter from the commission of the same crime.

That the sin to which I allude, is greater in every subsequent act than in the first,

appears also from the consideration that it is fornication for hire. In the first deviation from rectitude, there are generally, if not always, many things between the parties that, in a comparative view, might be plausibly urged to abate the severity of reproach. On the part of the woman, it is commonly, if not constantly, the result of affectionate attachment, induced to compliance by the most solemn oaths of fidelity; of immediate regard to the institutes that shall make them indissolubly one; and this too at the moment when expressions of tenderness are mutually exchanged, when implicit confidence has banished the fears of suspicion, and when this sacrifice is ardently implored as the only unequivocal proof of reciprocal esteem.

'Base is the tongue whose vile pernicious art
Delights the ear but to corrupt the heart;
That takes advantage of the cheerful hour,
When weaken'd Virtue bends to Nature's power,
And would the goodness of the soul efface,
To substitute dishonour in her place.'

But in that promiscuous intercourse for which you are an advocate, or which, at least, you think comparatively blameless, the inducements to lewdness are perfectly dissimilar. They are shocking to decency as well as to virtue. There is no reciprocal attachment between the parties—no sympathy of soul; none of those fascinating endearments by which the heart is sometimes softened into fondness, and rendered less able to resist the apparently warm caresses of esteem—nay; there is not even the profession of regard. On the part of the man, it is the mere indulgence of licentious appetite; and when this appetite is gratified, the miserable object, who has been bribed to be vitious, is despised or forgotten.

I know it is urged in excuse for this abominable practice, that no compulsatory means are adopted; that compliance, on the

part of the woman, is her own voluntary act, for which she receives ample recompence, and for the turpitude of which she alone is answerable.

That the woman is, in this case, answerable for her own conduct, there can be no doubt. But if two persons voluntarily engage to perpetrate an immoral act, it is equally certain that both the parties must be involved in equal guilt. If there be any difference, in point of atrocity, it will rest on the individual who made the infamous proposal: and whether the excess in these transactions will attach to yourself, or to those ladies who are so prompt to enter into compact, is not my business to determine. It is presumed, however, that whether these ladies be placid or severe, complaisant or reserved, they will not think themselves highly honoured, nor yet very

gallantly treated, when it is known with what facility contracts of this nature are completed.

But what, Adolphus, is the import of the apology you adduce? It runs thus—The object of my lascivious pursuit is propense to evil, and therefore I may innocently induce her to commit it. Of this plea, in any other case, Adolphus would be seriously ashamed. For if it be the duty of benevolence not to suffer sin to rest upon a brother without remonstrance and reproof, he that shall seek to augment it cannot be blameless: and it argues extreme depravity, as well as extreme ignorance, to imagine that the guilt of sin can be cancelled by the hire that produced it.

But suffer me to ask, Sir, whether, if all circumstances be candidly considered,

the prostitution of these women, even where there is no visible resistance, can fairly be denominated voluntary? That in one view it is voluntary, and of course vitious, is readily allowed; but it is not always the result of licentious desire, as you unhandsomely suggest, but a practice induced by necessity: for there are thousands of these miserable beings, whose very lives are supposed to depend on the sacrifice of every thing dear to chastity and to virtue; who are daily solicited to criminal indulgence by the temptation of reward, which not inclination, but want, compels them to receive; so that to gratify the lust of the moment, advantage is taken of poverty and of wretchedness; and, in contempt of the mandates of Heaven, the laws of humanity, and the rules of decorum, the pitiable delinquent is impelled to vice, without the wish to be vitious.

It has been remarked, by a female writer of uncommon celebrity, ‘ That personal intimacy, without affection, is one of the most degrading, as well as the most painful states in which a woman of any taste, not to speak of the peculiar delicacy of fostered sensibility, can be placed.’

Wretched, therefore, and truly lamentable, is the case of her who is led to depend on the hire of prostitution for subsistence :

——‘ Condemn’d the mercenary tool
Of brutal lust, while heaves the indignant heart
With Virtue’s stifled sigh, to fold her arms
Round the rank felon, and for daily bread
To hug contagion to her poison’d breast;’——

It is perhaps commonly, though erroneously, imagined that familiarity with vice has totally extinguished in these unhappy beings all the tender sensibilities of human nature. That there are many who, apparently, are lost to every sense of decency

and of shame, cannot be denied; yet, who will say, even of these, that the tear of sorrow never flows—that the heart never sighs for release from profligacy and ruin!

If, however, some are incorrigibly obdurate, there are hundreds, nay, there are thousands whose feelings are exquisitely alive to all the indignities they suffer—who lothe the impure reptiles, whom necessity constrains them to embrace with the semblance of pleasure; and who, in the hour of reflection, not only execrate the detestable villains by whom they were first betrayed, but all those inhuman monsters who have ever since sought to bribe them to corruption, to increase their guilt, to perpetuate their infamy, 'and with whom beggary would have disdained intercourse, had she not been allured by hopes of relief.'

To a reflecting mind, there is something extremely shocking in the idea of hiring a

person to be vitious! — It is a species of iniquity for which there is no apology. For sin that results from inadvertence, or from the impulse of momentary passion, something in extenuation might be plausibly urged: but this is premeditated evil!—a deliberate contract for the perpetration of wickedness—for the completion of which the pander to lust pays the price of corruption, while she that receives it is perhaps secretly cursing both the wretch and the recompence.

Instead therefore of seeking to augment the stores of guilt and of wretchedness, how much more worthy the man and the christian, to aim at reclaiming these deluded women?—to endeavour to convince them that the first departure from rectitude was vitious; that a continuance of the same practice must render them still more criminal, involve greater calamity, and if not totally abandoned, issue in perdition.

Thus to act, Sir, would be true beneficence; something worthy the name of philanthropy: and let it never be forgotten, that in proportion as their misery and their guilt are great, are our obligations to make use of every possible mean to extricate the unhappy sufferers from both.

In those dissolute circles to which you are no stranger, and to which, Sir, I would direct your benevolent attention, there is ample room for humanity to operate. Here poverty, disease, and wretchedness are seen involved in all the horrors of guilt and of infamy—misery on every hand, that calls aloud for compassion and for succour—enough of human woe to rouse the philanthropist to vigorous exertion; and these exertions will be more than redoubled, when it is considered that he may be instrumental

in securing to others not merely temporary relief, but felicity that shall last for ever!

'To wipe all tears from off all faces, is indeed a task too hard for mortals; but to alleviate misfortunes is often within the most limited power: yet the opportunities which every day affords of relieving the most wretched of human beings, are overlooked and neglected, with equal disregard of policy and goodness.'

Surely, Sir, you are not aware that, in the gratification of lascivious propensities, you are strengthening the hands of wickedness; that you virtually commend the conduct against which it is your duty to protest: for unless the object of your vitious pleasures indulge serious reflection, and nicely discriminate, she is not likely to

imagine there can be much evil in a practice which not only yourself, but others, are so importunate to sanction.

'If, says the Author of the Rambler, those who pass their days in plenty and security, could visit for an hour the dismal receptacles to which the prostitute retires from her nocturnal excursions, and see the wretches that lie crowded together, mad with intemperance, ghastly with famine, nauseous with filth, and noisome with disease; it would not be easy for any degree of abhorrence to harden them against compassion, or to repress the desire which they must immediately feel to rescue such numbers of human beings from a state so dreadful.

'There are places, indeed, set apart, to which these unhappy creatures may resort, when the diseases of incontinence seize upon

them; but if they obtain a cure, to what are they reduced? Either to return with the small remains of beauty to their former guilt, or perish in the streets with nakedness and hunger.

'How frequently have the gay and thoughtless, in their evening frolicks, seen a band of these miserable females, covered with rags, shivering with cold, and pining with hunger; and, without either pitying their calamities, or reflecting upon the cruelty of those who perhaps first seduced them by caresses of fondness, or magnificence of promises, go on to reduce others to the same wretchedness by the same means.'

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

As all my wrongs distressful I repeat,
Say, can thy pulse with equal cadence beat?
Canst thou know peace? is conscience mute within?
That upright delegate for secret sin:
Is nature so extinguish'd in thy heart,
That not one spark remains to take my part?
Not one repentant throb, one grateful sigh?
Thy breast unruffled, and unwet thy eye?
Thou cool betrayer, temperate in ill!
Thou nor remorse, nor thought humane canst feel:
By right or wrong disdaining to be mov'd,
Unprincipled, unloving, and unlov'd.

LORD HERVEY.

I KNOW, Sir, it has been vehemently urged, in palliation of this criminal connection between the sexes, that overtures for seduction have frequently, in the first instance, been rather made than solicited, and that the moral evil of such intercourse attaches therefore more properly to the woman than to the man.

Were this alarming crimination founded in truth, it is unmanly—it is perfidious, and not applicable, surely, to those polite circles with which Adolphus is familiar, and where delicacy of sentiment, and purity of manners, must be eminently prominent! It is allowed, indeed, that individuals may be found whose discretion has not been always awake; who, perhaps, without evil intention, have unwarily transgressed the rules of prudence; but I believe it scarcely possible to find a woman who has not manifested unequivocal aversion from the first approaches to criminal indulgence; and were men who thus declaim, not more anxious to find an apology for their own enormities, than to preserve the honour and reputation of the sex, they would not attribute the want of rectitude to feminine indecorum, but to their own concupiscence and their own treachery.

But supposing these unmanly reflections to be just, what inferences are intended to be drawn from the premises? Not, surely, that the man is therefore excusable! This would be to supersede all moral obligation; unless, indeed, it can be proved that the rule of duty intended for the one is not binding on the other.

'That a woman should at present be almost driven from society, for an offence which men commit nearly with impunity, seems, as a good writer expresses it, to be undoubtedly a breach of natural justice.' The dissolute propensities illiberally ascribed to the woman in this case, are not to guide the actions of the man; nor do the alleged incitements to evil extenuate his guilt. He is not irresistibly impelled to compliance; nor induced by the cries of indigence and hunger. He is very differently situated from those unhappy women who live by

the wages of prostitution: for it is not even imagined, in this instance, that subsistence is connected with crime. If, therefore, he become the perpetrator of lewdness, it is to gratify his own, and not the concupiscence of others: he is the slave of his own corruptions, and his conduct is completely vitious.

Were we, indeed, to judge from what is heard in fashionable circles, when the detection of an illicit amour affords opportunity for discussing the crimes of prostitution and seduction, it might be naturally concluded from remarks often made by the sex, to whom delicacy of sentiment, and niceness of discrimination, are always appropriate, that continence is not a duty incumbent on the man. The whole of the opprobrium is at once thrown on the woman, or at least the crime which is deemed unpardonable in her, is viewed, in refe-

rence to him, as an affair of trivial importance; a matter of course;—as if he could be an accomplice in the deed, without being involved in either the guilt or the infamy.

That these remarks are neither novel nor invidious, will be readily allowed by those who are much acquainted with the world! 'How is it to be reconciled with the decisions of principle, says the ingenious Hannah More, that delicate women should receive with complacency the successful libertine, who has been detected by the wretched father, or the injured husband, in a criminal commerce, the discovery of which has too justly banished the unhappy partner of his crime from virtuous society? Nay, if he happen to be very handsome, or very brave, or very fashionable, is there not sometimes a kind of dishonourable competition for his favour? But

whether his popularity be derived from birth, or parts, or person, or (which is often a substitute for all) from his having made his way into good company; women of distinction sully the sanctity of virtue by the too visible pleasure they sometimes express at the attentions of such a popular libertine, whose voluble small-talk they admire, and whose sprightly nothings they quote, and whom, perhaps, their very favour tends to prevent from becoming a better character, because he finds himself more acceptable as he is.'

Whatever discrimination modern refinement may suggest on this subject, the law of God strictly prohibits illicit commerce to both the man and the woman, and ought to be by each implicitly obeyed: and were its sacred injunctions properly regarded by the men who calumniate the sex as the instigators of seduction, they would

not find themselves perpetually harassed with temptations to break it.

But the defamatory charge adduced is not founded in fact. It is a vile subterfuge intended to hide the deformity of lascivious conduct—a foul aspersion upon feminine character. But, while those who ought to be the protectors of innocence, and the patrons of virtue, are heedfully watching for the unguarded moment when they may become the successful prompters to vice, and the agents of corruption, we must expect to be perpetually stunned with invectives; to be told of the seductive manœuvres of these enemies to masculine purity, and compelled to hear indiscriminate censure lavished on the sex, deprived of which, society would be without endearment.

'Sequester'd from our sex, vain man, relate
Your solitary pleasure's sullen state!

What tender joys sit brooding o'er your store?
What slumbers sooth Ambition bath'd in gore?
'Tis our's, th' unsc[illegible]l passion to control,
To pour the balm that heals the wounded soul;
To lure the fancy with diviner themes
Than Wealth, than Power's delusive restless dreams.'

That our streets are crowded with prostitutes has long been just matter of complaint. The incautious youth is perpetually exposed to their fascinating allurements, is frequently insnared by their artful intrigues, imperceptibly bewildered in the labyrinths of vice, his morals and his health alike contaminated, and, eventually, precipitated into the gulph of ruin. Conjecture is indeed nonplussed in attempting to calculate the misery inflicted on society by these abandoned women: and it is this consideration that has induced individuals unfeelingly to represent them as vermin which mankind, by common consent, should labour to exterminate.

But why, it may be asked, are those deluded women to be thus overwhelmed with reproach? Are they exclusively guilty?—have they no coadjutors; none who may justly participate the blame and soften the severity of censure? That they are accessary to many of the evils of which they are accused, there can be little doubt. But when speaking on a subject so pregnant with calamity, surely it is reasonable to advert to first principles; to recollect that these degenerate beings were once chaste; without either such malignancy of intention, or such depravity of manners; and might have remained so to this hour, but for the intrigues and perfidy of man. Delinquency therefore, in the first instance, attaches to him: and if it be remembered that, ever since the moment of deviation from rectitude, these miserable creatures have been hunted as the receptacles of lust; the opprobrium will be found to rest prin-

cipally on the lascivious wretch who, to gratify a worse than brutal appetite, has never ceased to allure them to prostitution by the hope of reward, till they have become familiar with vice, loathsome by disease, a burthen to themselves, and a nuisance to the world.

There are perhaps no persons so vehemently clamorous against those miserable beings, as the men who live in habits of personal intimacy with them, and who, in fact, may justly be considered as accessary to that dissolute conduct by which they are disgraced, by which the public happiness is endangered, and the morals of many too frequently corrupted.

Men of this description should therefore remember that, whatever may be the different constitutional propensities of individuals, the lewdness of which they com-

plain is the result of familiarity with vice. No woman becomes at once completely vitious: and if some of the sex are so shamefully abandoned as to relinquish all pretensions to decorum, it might soften the vehemence of reproach, were those gentlemen to reflect that they have been associates with them in all the stages of infamy; that, by the continuance of a criminal intercourse, they have been instrumental in obliterating every vestige of modesty—in producing obduracy of heart and profligacy of manners; and but for whose pernicious allurements and licentious conduct, these wretched women might have remained, if not innocent, at least more decent, and of course less vitious.

Let not the woman therefore be unmercifully loaded with infamy as exclusively guilty; nor that be deemed an unpardonable crime in her, which by the man is com-

monly practised without ignominy, and too frequently without censure. Whatever may be justly said of feminine imprudence, the guilt of seduction originates with him; and in every subsequent act of defilement he is generally the principal aggressor, and answerable in a very great degree for all the calamity that results from such criminal connections.

It has been justly remarked by Archdeacon Paley, 'That the men are in all respects the most virtuous in countries where the women are most chaste.' The indulgence of prostitution is therefore, independent of moral considerations, extremely impolitic: and were it not a truth witnessed by daily experience, it might appear incredible that men should take so much pains to degrade and corrupt the sex to which society is indebted for its most refined enjoyments. But, alas! such is the predomi-

nancy of lust in this case, that men seem to disregard the pernicious tendency of their own conduct. For as members of the community at large, the felicity of man is so closely connected with the virtues, and his misery with the vices of women, that every endeavour to debase the sex, is virtually an attempt to diminish not only his own but the public happiness.

Chastity is a virtue that adds dignity and lustre to character, and for the loss of which there is no recompence. It is essential to the comfort of social and domestic life: 'without it, beauty is unlovely, and rank contemptible; good breeding degenerates into wantonness, and wit into impudence.'

Let the man therefore act conformably to the station in which Providence has placed him. Let him approach the sex which he is bound to honour and protect,

in such a manner as shall demonstrate to the world, that chastity is lovely, and entitled to homage. Let him despise the blandishments of flattery, abandon the wiles of seduction, be open, manly, generous, and he will meet a grateful return. The women will applaud his frankness, esteem his virtue, respect his person, and delight in his happiness. The public will then no longer have to complain of feminine imprudence; our youths will be kept from the allurements of temptation and the contagion of disease; marriage, which is now too much neglected or despised, will become honourable in all; and, degenerate as we are, the morals of mankind experience at least a considerable degree of melioration.

Thus, Sir, have I given you with great freedom a few cursory thoughts on the present subject. Whether these thoughts

merit your attention, or will influence your conduct towards those unhappy women, whom I consider as objects of commiseration rather than of concupiscence, is not my province to determine. But, suffer me to say, that however light you may make of these thoughts, or of your own conduct, the hour is coming in which you will think seriously of both—For if there be any difference between virtue and vice; between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not—the great Rector of the world will distinguish between the one and the other: and let it never be forgotten, that at his bar illustrious descent and dignity of station will be of no use; here, the prince and the peasant are on a level. For he who is Truth itself hath said, 'That every work shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

——I saw, I nightly saw, with wearied feet,
The beauteous mourner stray from street to street.
On the damp earth, beneath the dripping shed,
Languid she laid her melancholy head.
Pale was her cheek that met the icy air;
Her faded eye was fix'd, as in despair.
Keen blew the wind, and wild came down the snow,
But her cold heart had ceas'd to ache with woe.
How chang'd from her, who, 'midst her native bow'rs,
Tended at setting sun her fragrant flow'rs;
Or warbling sweet, to sooth a wearied sire,
Touch'd to some tender tune her golden wire.

RICHARDS.

THAT there are benevolent institutions for the relief of those unhappy women who live by prostitution, is readily acknowledged. But let it be remembered, Sir, that these institutions, however excellent in themselves, are not adapted to prevent the evil I lament. They can, at most, but alleviate the sufferings of humanity—afford a temporary supply for the wants of hunger and disease—give some small respite for reflec-

tion and amendment—but they can neither restore the reputation that is lost, obliterate the stains of pollution, nor sooth the anguish of remorse.

With some persons it perhaps may be a question whether, on the whole, these institutions be not unfriendly to virtue: because it may be thought that the motives to resist approaches to corruption may possibly be weakened by the remembrance of there being asylums to which penitence may at any time resort; and to which delinquents may always apply when disease and wretchedness shall render them objects of compassion.

In the present state, we are exposed, on every hand, to disasters which perhaps no caution can prevent, nor any vigilance escape. Every appointment of beneficence intended to mitigate the sufferings of indi-

gence, must therefore be highly commendable: and if it be doubtful whether similar provision should be made for calamity which is the result not of accident, but of voluntary guilt; there can be no hazard in believing that the friends to these receptacles of misery are influenced by the purest benevolence.

Many and painful are the scenes we are called to witness in the different walks of life. But surely no wretchedness can exceed that which is experienced in the last stage of temporary existence by some of the lower orders of these unhappy women. Forsaken by the men who completed their ruin—left without a friend—without solace, and without hope—exposed to all the horrors of want—infected with noisome disease—tormented with guilt—frantic with rage—and perhaps horribly profane in the agonies of death!

Of the dreadful situation of these women we have a melancholy picture drawn by the late Henry Fielding, Esq. on the authority of Mr. Church, then High Constable of Holborn.

'In the parish of St. Giles', there are a great number of houses set apart for the reception of idle persons and vagabonds, who have their lodgings for two-pence a night. In this parish, and in St. George, Bloomsbury, one woman alone occupies seven of these houses, all accommodated with miserable beds, from the cellar to the garret, for such twopenny lodgers. In these beds, several of which are in the same room, men and women, often strangers to each other, lie promiscuously; the price of a double bed being no more than three-pence, as an encouragement to them to lie together. In the execution of search-warrants, Mr. Welch rarely found less than twenty

of these houses open for the reception of all comers at the latest hours; and in one of these houses, which was not large, he numbered fifty-eight persons of both sexes, the stench of whom was so intolerable, that it compelled him in a very short time to quit the place.—Nay, I can add, says Mr. Fielding, what I myself once saw in the parish of Shoreditch, where two small houses were emptied of near seventy men and women:—and such is the poverty of these wretches, that upon searching all the above number, the money found upon all of them did not amount to one shilling: and I have been credibly informed, that a single loaf has supplied a whole family with their provisions for a week. If any of these miserable creatures fall sick (and it is almost a miracle, that stench, vermin, and want, should ever suffer them to be well), they are turned out in the streets by the merciless host or hostess, where, unless some parish-officers

of extraordinary charity relieve them, they are sure miserably to perish.

This picture, it is added, taken from the life, will appear strange to many; for the evil described is, I am confident, very little known, especially to those of the better sort. Indeed, this is the only excuse, and I believe the only reason, that it hath been so long tolerated: for when we consider the number of these wretches, which, in the outskirts of the town, amounts to a great many thousands, it is a nuisance which will appear to be big with every moral and political mischief.'

Female prostitution in the metropolis, in point of extent, certainly exceeds, says Mr. Colquhoun, credibility. The whole number he estimates at fifty thousand, which he divides into four classes.

Of the class of well educated women it is earnestly hoped, he says, that the number does not exceed two thousand.

Of the class composed of persons above the rank of menial servants, perhaps three thousand.

Of the class who may have been employed as menial servants, or seduced in very early life, it is conjectured in all parts of the town, including Wapping, and the streets adjoining the river, there may not be less, who live wholly by prostitution, than twenty thousand.

Of those in different ranks in society, who live partly by prostitution, including the multitudes of low females, who cohabit with labourers and others without matri-

mony, there may be in all, in the metropolis, about twenty-five thousand.

'When, says Mr. Colquhoun, a general survey is taken of the metropolis—the great numbers among the higher and middle classes of life, who live unmarried—the multitudes of young men yearly arriving at the age of puberty—the strangers who resort to the metropolis—the seamen and nautical labourers employed in the trade of the river Thames, who amount at least to forty thousand—and the profligate state of society in vulgar life, the intelligent mind will soon be reconciled to the statement, which at first view would seem to excite doubts, and require investigation.'

'To prevent the existence of prostitution, even to a considerable extent, in so great a metropolis as London, is, says this writer, as impossible as to resist the torrent of the

tides. The evil, however, is admitted to be of a magnitude that is excessive, and imperiously calls for a remedy.—Not certainly a remedy against the possibility of female prostitution; for it has already been stated, that it is a misfortune that must be endured in large societies.—All that can be attempted is, to divest it of the faculty of extending its noxious influence beyond certain bounds, and restrain those excesses and indecencies which are extremely noxious to society, and unavoidably productive of depravity and crimes.'

To answer these purposes, it is thought that 'a prudent and discreet regulation of prostitutes would operate powerfully, not only in gradually diminishing their numbers, but also in securing public morals against the insults to which they are exposed, both in the open streets and at places of public entertainments.'

Mr. Colquhoun is aware that legislative authority to this measure might have the appearance of sanctioning pursuits of infamy. But the legislature, he says, has done every thing short of this, to effect the object; but instead of promoting good, the evil has increased.

If this statement be literally correct, the measure proposed, were it to be as productive of good as this vigilant magistrate supposes, would not therefore be justifiable: for what is morally wrong, can never be politically right. If prostitution be a crime, to sanction it under any modifications, would, in any legislature, be an act, not of wisdom but of wickedness. We are not to do evil that good may come: and nothing but the ardor of this very intelligent writer's zeal for the public welfare, could have hindered him from seeing the force,

and acknowledging the propriety of this divine aphorism.

'The avowed toleration, and in some countries the licensing, taxing, and regulating of public brothels, has, says Mr. Paley, appeared to the people an authorizing of fornication, and has contributed, with other causes, so far to vitiate the public opinion, that there is no practice of which the immorality is so little considered, or acknowledged, although there are few in which it can more plainly be made out. The legislators who have patronized receptacles of prostitution, ought to have foreseen this effect, as well as considered, that whatever facilitates fornication diminishes marriages; and as to the usual apology for this relaxed discipline, the danger of greater enormities, if access to prostitutes were too strictly watched and prohibited, it will be

time enough to look to that after the laws and the magistrates have done their utmost. The greatest vigilance of both will do more than oppose some bounds and some difficulties to this intercourse.'

It appears from the statute books, that our ancestors thought the crime of fornication much more heinous than the refinements of modern philosophy will probably allow. For in the year 1650, not only incest and wilful adultery were made capital crimes, but also the repeated act of keeping a brothel, or committing fornication, were (upon a second conviction) made felony without benefit of clergy. But, at the restoration, when men, from an abhorrence of the hypocrisy of the late times, fell into a contrary extreme of licentiousness, it was not thought proper, says Sir William Blackstone, to renew a law of such unfashionable rigour. And these offences

have been ever since left to the feeble coercion of the spiritual court, according to the rules of the canon law; a law which has treated the offence of incontinence, nay, even adultery itself, with a degree of tenderness and lenity; owing, perhaps, to the constrained celibacy of its first compilers.

That sanguinary punishments are most effectual for the prevention of crimes, is a doctrine to which I cannot subscribe. In no country are there so many statutes of this nature as in England; and in no country are the crimes they were intended to prevent so frequently repeated.

Were the existing laws against fornication properly administered, there can be little doubt but that the offence would be less frequent: or if not, the fear of suffering the punishment they threaten, would certainly occasion some refinements in vice:

the crime would at least be more secretly committed, and of course be less hurtful to society. At any rate, ‘ let the laws and the magistrates do their utmost to prevent it,’ and when it is known that their joint efforts are inadequate, it will then be time enough to have recourse to experiment.

But after all, Adolphus, permit me to assure you that the most speedy and the most effectual way to put an end to this detestable practice, is for your sex to be virtuous. This, common sense demonstrates to be equal to all the exigencies of the case. It is, besides, a duty they owe to the great Parent of the universe—to society—to themselves : and he must be shockingly perverse indeed with whom these considerations have no weight.

If, however, neither the injunctions of heaven—the welfare of others, nor the love

of self can hinder or restrain the licentious conduct I deplore: if, to punish inveterate delinquents, we must at all events have a revision and an alteration of the penal laws; let the weight of their sanctions rest principally on the man—not on the woman. He is not impelled to vice by wretchedness and hunger: and should he feel a wish to gratify the propensities of nature, marriage is the mean graciously appointed.—In this endearing connection, he will have caresses of fondness without guile, and enjoyment without guilt.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER V.

How cold I feel life's idle current flow,
Where once the dancing spirits loved to glow!
No more these eyes with youthful rapture shine,
Nor cheeks soft blushing speak a warmth divine:
Graceful no more amid the festive dance
My steps with easy dignity advance,
And all the glossy locks, whose ringlets spread
O'er my fair neck, the honours of my head,
Cease the neat labours of my hand to know;
Ill suits the ease of elegance with woe!

MARRIOT.

I KNOW, Sir, it has been frequently remarked, that the prominent foible of the sex is an excessive love of splendour and of dress; that for these no sacrifice is thought too dear, and for the enjoyment of which thousands have precipitated themselves into the gulph of misery and ruin.

That women, who are anxious to attract notice by the embellishments of art, and ambitious of exacting homage from every spectator, are more likely to be ensnared by these temptations than those are who consider extrinsic decorations as of trivial importance, there can be no doubt. But it is charitably hoped that, even among the thoughtless and the gay who glitter on the stage, and who sigh most for pre-eminence in the lists of fame, there are those who would sooner perish than sacrifice their honour for the gaudery of dress, or the splendour of magnificence.

That the exterior of man has a wonderful, and sometimes a very pernicious influence over our opinions and our conduct, is certain. The philosopher is highly gratified in minutely examining the beauties of nature; in contemplating a serene sky;

in beholding scenes either grand or terrific; but his example creates no alarm—excites no general interest: he may pursue his researches without interruption, and monopolize pleasure without envy. But the splendid and the gay, who sparkle in the dance, meet a thousand competitors all emulous to attract the same notice by the same means, and who, rather than fail of success, are prompt too frequently to risk both their reputation and their quiet to obtain de

an

From inordinate attachment to the glare of such pageantry, and the love of popular distinction, we are seldom effectually divorced but by the pressure of calamity. In the hour of disease, or in the prospects of death, we feel how little there is in the world that is really conducive to permanent happiness. Terrestrial things have then no lustre! We see at once the necessity of

familiarity with other prospects, and of adherence to objects intrinsically excellent, and which, in the moment of need, can requite expectation by the completion of its wishes.

You chide me, Sir Edward, said Mary, for the want of vivacity—for inattention to my person, and to the embellishments of dress—for withholding the smile of fondness—and for having occasioned interviews with you to be less frequent, because they have been rendered less pleasing.

The charge, Sir, I acknowledge to be just; but let me assure you that, since my return from Sleaford, I have been a stranger to repose!—My departure, you remember, was protracted by frivolous delays; so that I arrived at the end of my journey, just as the humane companions of my childhood had returned from paying the last

tribute of respect to the remains of my venerable father. After a momentary pause permitted me to speak, and I had received the unfeigned condolence of my friends; I hastened, more out of regard to decency than to gratify the impulse of natural affection, to see the grave of him whose heart I had broken by my perverseness and my crimes.

The Sexton had just closed the receptacle of death!- I stood, gazing, motionless, and pensive. An involuntary sigh convulsed my heart—the tears trickled down my cheek—a thousand past occurrences of rebellion and ingratitude rushed to remembrance—my soul was distracted with terror and remorse; and I would have given ten thousand worlds for a sight of him, the recollection of whose endearing tenderness pierced me through with unutterable anguish!

And art thou gone, I exclaimed—for ever gone—thou best of fathers!—What! must I never receive again the salutary precept from his lips—never more see the tear of fondness sparkle in his eye—never ask forgiveness at his feet!—I realized the affecting scene beheld by those sympathizing friends who witnessed his departure.—I heard the faltering words he uttered in the agonies of death!—'Tell her—O tell my child—I forgive her—I love her still—Surely she might have come—to have taken a last adieu!—My heart sinks—O my child—my Mary!'—and expired.

The inexpressible anguish I then felt, and which, Sir, I still feel, is daily augmented by the remembrance of my degeneracy and guilt! Expect from me therefore neither vivacity nor complacence: for how can she be otherwise than wretched who, without affection and without friend-

ship; without the impulse of appetence or the expectation of enjoyment, has become the voluntary drudge of lewdness, and, for the sake of momentary affluence and splendour, has relinquished pretension to every thing that can render her sex estimable and lovely!

It is true, I have long been subservient to your wishes, and, apparently, delighted with the attention I received; but those caresses, which were considered as expressions of fondness, and which your munificence so amply rewarded, were not the result of either attachment or esteem. I was conscious of being neither loved nor respected—that I was retained in finery and in pomp merely to gratify your licentious appetite; and believe me, Sir, in the midst of all my sprightliness and gaiety, I passed a life without endearment, and secretly detested myself for the crimes you basely

hired me to commit, and which I had not the virtue to forsake: and had it not been for the death of him whom my vices and ingratitude have hurried to the grave, I should still have remained the slave of caprice and of lust, and have continued to requite your munificence with the semblance of gratitude and rapture, while, from my heart, I detested your embrace.

Your looks tell me, Sir Edward, that my frankness has roused your indignation and aversion. But why precipitately leave me?—Listen a moment, I entreat you, to the most wretched of women—and forgive the hypocrisy of my heart. This hypocrisy is, I acknowledge, a dreadful proof how much I am depraved; but this depravity, let it be remembered, has been cruelly augmented by yourself!—and the only reparation in your power, and which, as the last favour, I solicit you to make, is—that

you will remove me far from the scenes that have witnessed our atrocities; and where my person and my infamy are equally unknown—that the remainder of my days may be spent in imploring from the benignity of Heaven, that forgiveness without which I am lost for ever!

I am, &c.

FINIS

C. WHITTINGHAM, *Printer*,
Dean Street, Fetter-Lane, London.

BRITISH
6 DE 71
MUSEUM